



Toolkit for Strengthening Diversity in Preservation Planning

INTRODUCTION

The demographics and culture of the United States are continually changing and there is a pressing need to discuss best strategies for incorporating diverse communities and viewpoints into statewide historic preservation planning. The National Park Service encourages state planners to identify and engage communities that have not been involved in previous statewide planning efforts or that have a significant stake in historic resources that have not been the focus of preservation work in the past.

There are opportunities to explore all phases of the preservation planning process in relation to social and cultural diversity. Ideally, this will be a collaborative effort, supported by NPS, State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) professionals, and diverse community stakeholders.

KEY TERMS

Equity: fairness or justice in the way people are treated.

Formal interpretation: creating opportunities for audiences to connect with the values of historic places, landscapes, artifacts, and other physical resources within the contexts of architecture, history, and culture.

Historic resource inventories: official lists of historically significant districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects. This document refers to a variety of historic resource inventories including local, State, and Tribal Registers of Historic Places, the National Register of Historic Places, and National Historic Landmarks.

Inclusiveness: collaborative processes where all stakeholders offer input and are addressed by the plan.

Underrepresented community: cultural or social populations, and related organizations, that have not been previously engaged in statewide planning efforts or been the focus of preservation work in the past.

TOOLKIT FOR STRENGTHENING DIVERSITY

This toolkit provides practical recommendations for incorporating increasingly diverse communities into multiple phases of the preservation planning process. There are many potential barriers to inclusiveness in statewide preservation planning. For example, in communities far from center cities with limited public transportation options, it may be difficult for residents to attend planning meetings in “central” locations. In another community, a block of buildings may be highly valued for their local history, but they do not meet traditional criteria used by the preservation community to determine historic significance; therefore, the buildings are overlooked by preservationists in the planning process. Strengthening diversity in preservation planning asks us to understand that every day, people deal with many types of obstacles when trying to become more involved in public affairs and voice their own interests, from basic transportation access to social marginalization.

More and more SHPOs are making diversity a priority through innovative outreach strategies and planning goals. Supporting the full spectrum of American communities and historic resources is an essential goal.

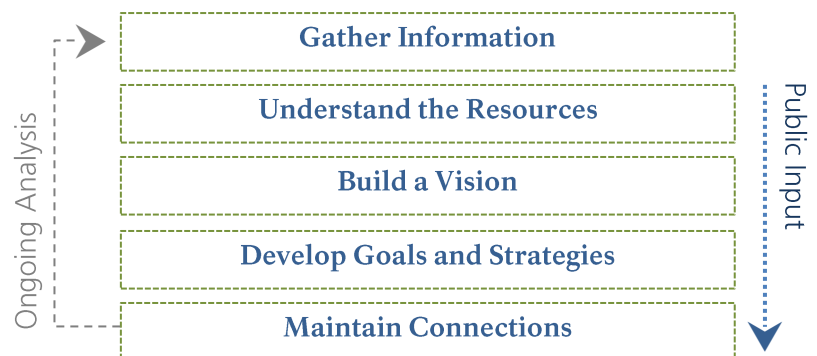
Long-term Benefits

- Inclusive interpretation of US history and culture, creating a richer American story.
- Sustained programs through new and valuable participants.
- Valuing diversity is woven into routine decision-making, resource allocation, and everyday interactions, producing equitable and culturally rich social environments.

This toolkit’s strategies are organized as “Essential Questions” and “Recommendations” within 5 planning phases. The Essential Questions can act as springboards for ideas on how the Recommendations can be enhanced and transformed for local contexts.

PLANNING PHASES

1. Gather Information
2. Understand the Resources
3. Build a Vision
4. Develop Goals and Strategies
5. Maintain Connections



RECOMMENDATIONS

Phase 1: Gather Information about Communities

At the beginning of the planning process, it is important to consider what new information must be gathered to better understand your state's diverse residents. Examine information about your state's population, its communities, and emerging needs. Creating an inclusive statewide planning process also begins with a demonstrated commitment to diversity in preservation programs, staffing, and outreach efforts.

Essential Questions

- What is the meaning of diversity in our state?
- What partnership agencies can provide demographic information about our state's diverse residents?
- Based on this information, what communities do we intend to engage in our planning process?

Recommendations

Name and Frame Equity Issues

- ☐ Define the meaning of diversity and inclusiveness to your planning process.
- ☐ Address how demographic diversity can affect the planning process and goals.
- ☐ Examine the root causes of underrepresentation for groups; are there past experiences that may influence desires to participate in the present?

Phase 2: Understand the Resources

Analyzing the existing state historic resource inventory for social and cultural diversity can serve a number of important purposes. First, analyzing the inventory can help your office to prioritize the identification and interpretation of more diverse historic resources. Additionally, it can help to further determine the partner organizations and communities that do you intend to engage.

Essential Questions

- How can we determine where to focus our identification and interpretation efforts based on inventory data or gaps in inventory data?
- Which of our partner organizations can help to identify and interpret more diverse historic resources?
- What are our first steps for engaging community members to help further identify valued resources?

Recommendations

Plan to Identify and Interpret Diverse Histories

- ☐ Analyze existing historic resource inventories in relation to cultural and social diversity; identify which communities and associated resources will become priorities in future inventory efforts.
- ☐ Plan to engage partners and community members in inventory and interpretation projects.
- ☐ In your plan's historic context section, highlight chosen priority areas and state resources with multicultural histories.

Identifying Diverse Communities and Interests

Enriching Our Heritage: District of Columbia Historic Preservation Plan, 2013-2016



Members of Deanwood History Committee gather at the First Baptist Church of Deanwood to review material for their publication developed out of the D.C. Community Heritage Project, *Washington D.C.'s Deanwood*, Arcadia Publishing, 2008. Humanities Council of Washington D.C.

One of the most challenging tasks may be the identification of underrepresented groups, which includes getting to know residents and learning about their preservation interests.

In partnership with the D.C. Humanities Council, the District of Columbia Historic Preservation Office (HPO) manages the *D.C. Community Heritage Project* (CHP), a program that provides funding and support to community leaders interested in preserving neighborhood history. In addition to supporting grassroots initiatives, the program helps the HPO to connect with the residents of different neighborhoods throughout D.C. and include their preservation interests in the district-wide plan.

Through CHP funding, the Deanwood community in southeast D.C. published a book on the community's important historic and cultural resources in 2008. Once a small African American community generally overlooked by preservationists and historians, Deanwood has become a hub of preservation and local history efforts. Furthermore, the program has been a catalyst for residents' involvement in the HPO's neighborhood architecture survey and the Ward 7 Heritage Trail, and the inclusion of African American communities' preservation goals in the 2016 plan.

Phase 3: Build a Vision

The vision for preservation in the state should be developed and evaluated collaboratively. A combination of professional and public input is essential to represent the broadest spectrum of viewpoints in the plan.

Essential Questions

- How can new partnerships expand and enhance the shared vision for statewide preservation?
- How can we reach diverse stakeholders throughout our state's regions?
- What public engagement strategies will help overcome participation barriers?

Recommendations

Empower Stakeholders and Leaders

- ☐ Empower groups to define their interests and vision of the future.
- ☐ Include leaders of underrepresented communities in professional steering committees.
- ☐ Build long-term partnerships with THPOs and culturally associated American Indian tribes.

Make Participation Public

- ☐ Create multiple options for public participation: surveys, social media, meetings, and focus groups.
- ☐ Vary location and dates of meetings to minimize the exclusion of specific populations. Take into account factors such as geographic location, work schedules, religious observances, and proximity to public transportation.
- ☐ Hire multi-lingual meeting facilitators from partner organizations or a consulting firm to serve as the lead or "face person" for public meetings.
- ☐ Define public's level of involvement in the decision-making process, from providing feedback to sharing decision making authority, to set expectations and reduce conflict.

Making Participation Public

Preserving Florida's Heritage: Florida's Statewide Preservation Plan, 2012-2016



Comprehensive Planning Meeting, Fort Lauderdale
Florida Division of Historical Resources

Florida's State Historic Preservation Office recognized the potential challenges of implementing an inclusive public input process, namely the large size of the state, the diversity of social and cultural groups, and residents' modest travel budgets. Reaching diverse social and cultural groups throughout the state was a high priority. These groups included northern Florida's rural communities, Cuban and Haitian communities in the south, and the American Indian tribes throughout the state, such as the Seminole Tribe of Florida and the Choctaw Nation of Florida.

To address geographic barriers to participation, Florida held 5 regional public input meetings.

Key partnerships helped the SHPO to reach local residents and publicize meetings. Partners included the Florida Public Archaeology Network, the Florida Trust for Historic Preservation, the Trust for Public Land, and the Miami Preservation Office. Personalized word of mouth invitations at community centers such as churches, service organizations, and schools also helped increase meeting attendance.

A consultant was hired to conduct the meetings and provide analysis. Attendees noted that it was a good opportunity to share ideas and develop a vision for preservation collectively, because most often people come together to respond to a problem or represent their own communities. Those who could not attend were encouraged to provide their opinions on historic preservation issues through an online survey.

Phase 4: Develop Goals and Strategies

In this phase of the planning process, develop goals for diverse communities to outline a statewide course of action that leverages existing efforts and empowers communities to become directly involved in preservation. Goals should be developed from the community and stakeholder values gathered from previous public input opportunities, creating real-world objectives for people to act upon.

Essential Questions

- How will we transform community values and interests into plan goals and strategies?
- Do our current inventory and interpretation practices value diverse resource types equally?
- In addition to survey and inventory projects, what are other ways to increase the diversity of communities involved in preservation?

Recommendations

Empower Communities to be Stewards and Interpreters

- ☐ Commit to achieving community interests through goals and actions in the plan.
- ☐ Support programs that provide funding and technical assistance to community leaders interested in preserving local history.
- ☐ Represent and highlight a range of preservation activities in the plan, including youth programs, conferences, and hands-on preservation training.

Support Collaboration and Skill Building

- ☐ Expand community-based training for preservation skills, such as how to prepare national and state register of historic places nominations.
- ☐ Partner with service, religious, and advocacy groups as well as established preservation organizations.

Plan for Inclusive Historic Resource Inventory and Stewardship

- ☐ Develop feasible and measurable resource documentation plans for resources valued by communities.
- ☐ Update older resource nominations to include more information about underrepresented groups.
- ☐ Hire professionals with demonstrated expertise in diverse histories and public history, who can work closely with community members.
- ☐ Engage communities in the inventory process and award volunteer efforts.

Supporting Collaboration and Skill Building

Preserving the Enchantment: New Mexico's Statewide Preservation Plan, 2012-2016

Ohkay Owingeh, "The Place of the Strong People," in New Mexico is more than 700 years old and is the largest of the Tewa-speaking Pueblos in the Southwest. It is comprised of four plazas surrounded by adobe dwellings and is the spiritual center of the community.

The Ohkay Owingeh Housing Authority initiated the pueblo preservation project in 2005 to preserve the central plazas, rehabilitate the adobe dwellings, and construct new affordable housing. The project would help maintain a co-existence of cultural traditions and contemporary life.

As part of its planning goals for more inclusive preservation programs, the New Mexico State Historic Preservation Office initiated a unique youth program that trained six Ohkay Owingeh high school students in pueblo documentation over five summers. The program started with \$7,500 from the Historic Preservation Fund and developed into a preservation program that leveraged \$8 million in public and private funding. The New Mexico SHPO continues as a strong advocate for Pueblo values and viewpoints.



Mud Plastering Workshop, Ohkay Owingeh Pueblo, New Mexico, Tania Hammidi, Photographer
Advisory Council for Historic Preservation

Phase 5: Maintain Connections

As goals for diversity in planning are broad beyond the state office's role, establishing partnerships to implement and monitor progress will strengthen the plan's long-term effectiveness and value.

Essential Questions

- We have integrated new goals for diversity in the plan. How can we make sure they will be effective?
- How can we make sure that our new partnerships are durable?

Recommendations

Implement Partnerships

- ☐ Share responsibilities in the plan with newly invested partnership organizations.
- ☐ Follow up on partners' progress through regular meetings and other forms of communication.

Open Communication

- ☐ Create online public forums to foster dialogue and ongoing investment from community members.

Review Progress

- ☐ Create brief summaries of the plan for purposes of public discussion.
- ☐ Include monitoring language in the plan, with room to make adjustments based on public feedback.
- ☐ Survey partner organizations for ways that your office can improve its work with them; survey questions may ask about dependability, attentiveness, commitment, and information sharing.

Maintaining Connections

Sustainable Preservation: California's Statewide Preservation Plan, 2013-2017



Chicano Park, San Diego, California
California State Historic Preservation Office

In an ongoing effort to provide a more representative picture of the state's diverse history, the California Office of Historic Preservation is currently developing a "Preserve Latino History" historic context study about Latino American experience in California.

The Preserve Latino History project is part the state plan's goals to make preservation reflect the diversity of California's communities and cultivate stewardship. The state office also desires to find out more about the historic places valued by Latino communities, particularly the 20th century vernacular buildings and other everyday places that contain rich cultural history.

A major component of the project is an interactive webpage where interested participants can submit their own Historic Properties Identification Forms in Spanish or English, to share and interpret the places that are significant to their communities. The online public input opportunity is also an important way to keep the lines of communication and collaboration open between the office and Latino communities across the state.

CONCLUSION

The *Toolkit for Strengthening Diversity in Preservation Planning* was developed through a mix of research methods including a review of historic preservation planning and urban planning literature; analysis of the 20 state preservation plans most recently approved by the NPS HPPP; NPS Staff online survey; and interviews with SHPO professionals. It is intended as a springboard for strategies that can help to better incorporate the experiences and viewpoints of diverse communities into multiple stages of the planning process. It is a challenging, but important task. This toolkit could not have been made without the innovative ideas already in action across the US in state historic preservation offices.

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